

*Filed subject to approval*

Easton Board of Education  
Meeting  
September 9, 2014  
Minutes

Attendance:

Board of Education: Bobroske, Hicks, Horowitz, Parker, Peskay (7:36 pm), Underberger  
Administration: Josefsberg, Sullivan, Pierson Ugol, Friedlander, Freeston, Fox Santora, Brownstein, Kaplan, Burke  
Others: 20 members of the staff and community, and a representative of the Easton Courier

Mr. Parker called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

Mrs. Fox Santora and Mrs. Kaplan introduced the new staff members. Dr. Josefsberg welcomed Cheryl Freeston, Easton/Redding Special Education Supervisor, back to the Easton school system.

Dr. Peskay arrived during the introduction of staff, 7:36 pm.

AGENDA CHANGE

**Motion: move that the Executive Session be moved to following the final Board Comment. Underberger, Hicks. Approved. Unanimous.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education add the approval of minutes of the August 4, 2014 meeting to the agenda. Hicks. Horowitz. Approved. Unanimous.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accept the minutes of the joint meeting of June 3, 2014 as submitted. Bobroske, Horowitz. Approved. 5-0-1. Dr. Underberger abstained.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accept the minutes of the Special Meeting of June 3, 2014 as submitted. Hicks, Bobroske. Approved. 5-0-1. Dr. Underberger abstained.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accept the minutes of the July 6, 2014 meeting as submitted. Hicks. Horowitz. Approved. Unanimous.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accept the minutes of the August 4, 2014 meeting as submitted. Hicks. Underberger. Approved. Unanimous.**

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accept the minutes of the August 18, 2014 meeting as submitted. Hicks. Horowitz. Approved. 5-0-1. Dr. Peskay abstained.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bettina Grob, HKMS PTA Co-Chair: Mrs. Grob addressed the board with the PTA concerns and efforts to improve exterior maintenance at Helen Keller Middle Schools. She noted particular concern about the condition of the building soffits at the front entry to the school.

Carroll Brooke, Easton Clean Energy Task Force: Mr. Brooke provided an update on the efforts of the Task Force for the addition of solar panels at Samuel Staples Elementary School to generate electricity for

the school and Town of Easton. Mr. Brooke explained the Town was awarded the purchase of Renewable Energy Certificates by United Illuminating which would provide half of the SSES annual electricity and is worth \$25,000/year. A RFQ for firms to engineer, build and operate the system was issued and the Task Force is evaluating two well qualified installers. The SSES roof was evaluated and found that the area for installation would need to be replaced before installing solar panels. Since the roof is only 9 years into a 20-year life, installation on the rooftop would not be economical. The alternative of a ground installation on part of the field behind the school is being explored. The most popular financing arrangement with public schools is a power purchase agreement whereby a private party builds, finances and operates the project 100% and the Town agrees to buy electricity at a significant reduction from market rates.

This topic is an agenda item and will be discussed at that time.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Hicks suggested that the topic of cell coverage within and outside the schools be discussed at a future board meeting.

Dr. Peskay suggested that when the decision was made to add an additional section of Kindergarten, additional seats could have been made available for the Open Choice Program, and asked Dr. Josefsberg to explore the option for additional Open Choice kindergarteners further.

#### DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON JUNE 30, 2014 OPERATING RESULTS AND OPERATING SURPLUS

Mrs. Sullivan reported fiscal 2013-14 ended with a \$38,000 unexpended balance. She noted that the Health Insurance Reserve Account is in good shape and did not need an additional contribution. She proposed establishing a Non-Lapsing Account-Board of Education Capital Reserve Account and the transfer of the \$38,000 into that account. CGS 10-248a allows for the establishment of such an account by the local board of finance for the deposit of any unexpended funds from the prior fiscal year from the budgeted appropriation for education, provided such amount does not exceed one percent of the total budgeted appropriation for education for such prior fiscal year. Mrs. Sullivan noted that the account could be used to fund education capital expenses, with joint approval of the Board of Education and Board of Finance, and Town Meeting for expenditures over \$20,000.

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education propose to the Easton Board of Finance the establishment of a Capital Reserve Fund per CCG 10-248a, and the transfer to the account of the unexpended funds from fiscal 2013-14 and future annual surplus amounts. Underberger, Hicks. Approved. Unanimous.**

#### DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPERVISOR CONTRACT

Dr. Josefsberg indicated the contract for the Special Education Supervisor contract was negotiated and he provided his recommendation.

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve the contract for the Easton Redding Special Education Supervisor contract with Cheryl Freeston for fiscal 2014-15 as presented. Underberger, Horowitz. Approved. Unanimous.**

#### DISCUSSION OF CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

Dr. Underberger reported that contract negotiations with the Easton Teachers Association were moving along nicely. He anticipates resolution by the end of October.

#### DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON CLEAN ENERGY TASK FORCE INFORMATION

The report provided by Task Force member Carroll Brooke was discussed. Since the area for the installation of the solar panels has moved from the school roof to the area behind the school and land that is owned by the town and not the responsibility of the Board of Education, board members felt the project moves to the Town of Easton for consideration. There was agreement that further discussion and consideration should include the board of selectmen and board of finance.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Samuel Staples Elementary School: Mrs. Fox-Santora reported school opened with 584 students. 32 new families were welcomed to SSES. She reported the Cub Scouts conducted a food drive for the Easton Food Pantry in recognition of World Hunger Day. Mrs. Fox-Santora thanked the PTA for their staff welcome back breakfast and lunch. A parent has offered a donation of \$500 to fund a student or defray the cost of several students to attend the Nature's Classroom program.

#### AGENDA ADDITION

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Finance add to the agenda Discussion and action on acceptance of donation. Underberger, Bobroske. Approved. Unanimous.**

#### DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON DONATION

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education accept with gratitude the donation of \$500 from an anonymous parent toward the Nature's Classroom program student expenses. Underberger, Bobroske. Approved. Unanimous.**

Mrs. Fox Santora also reported on a student initiative to include all children at play during recess. Benches on the playgrounds have been turned into "buddy benches" and a parent has painted them. Children looking for someone to play with are encouraged to use the bench. Mrs. Fox-Santora reported this has created a welcoming playground.

Mrs. Fox Santora also provided copies of student interest survey that will go out to parents. The goal of the survey is to assist teachers in recognizing the child's strengths and interests, and allow them to further personalize instruction. She also reported the new World Language instruction is going well, with each student, K-2, receiving 15 minutes of instruction each day.

Helen Keller Middle School: Mrs. Kaplan reported school opened with 323 students. She thanked the PTA for the feeding the staff on opening day. The PTA also organized a tour day for incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders. These students were welcomed to the building and were able to explore the school along with their schedule of classes. A new family orientation was held for the 11 new families at Keller. Mrs. Kaplan reported the new math course, Discrete Mathematics, is going well. One of the co-teachers of the class was present and gave a brief explanation of one of the topics being discussed. Mrs. Kaplan also thanked the PTA for sponsoring two assembly programs with author Tim Green.

Easton Special Education: Mrs. Friedlander reported she and Mrs. Freeston worked over the summer on the joining of the Easton and Redding Special Services staff. Mrs. Freeston will be responsible for the middle school and pre-school programs and Mrs. Friedlander will concentrate on the elementary level and the BASES program with the Center for Children with Special Needs (CCSN). They concentrated on policy and procedures, and staff trainings for the BASES program. She added that the new elliptical machine is a big hit with students.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction: Mrs. Pierson Ugol provided a written report and demonstrated progress made on curriculum. New curriculum information, for use by parents and teachers, will be on the website shortly. She reviewed the kind of information that will be available.

Director of Finance and Operations: Mrs. Sullivan reported health claims for July are tracking with the budget. Diesel fuel for the transportation fleet has been locked in at \$3.12/gal, and a savings of \$3,400 is anticipated. The bus fleet will be housed at the Joel Barlow stadium parking lot during the daytime, with the drivers being transported to the Bethel depot on one or two of the buses. She hopes this will result in some fuel savings. A new security grant has become available and an application is being completed. The Bethel tax issue on the transportation fleet has not been resolved and Mrs. Sullivan has a court date in October.

Superintendent: Dr. Josefsberg commented briefly on the more things change historically, the more things stay the same. He quoted some minutes from the Easton Board of Education meetings of 40 years ago.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Shannon Barnett, South Park: Mrs. Barnett commented on the temperature conditions in the schools during the warm September and June days. She suggested the board discuss the issue at future meetings, and in the meantime, perhaps fans in the classrooms could help.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Parker suggested those in the audience read the minutes of the July 6 meeting carefully to learn of the thoughtful board discussion regarding the future and goals for education in Easton. He thanked the Easton Learning Foundation and the PTA for their work on the outdoor classroom, noting his particular interest in the area.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

**Motion: move to recess to executive session for a discussion of contract negotiations. Hicks, Peskay. Approved. Unanimous.**

Dr. Josefsberg and Mrs. Sullivan were invited to be present.

The meeting recessed at 9:22 pm

#### RECONVENE

The Chair reconvened the meeting in public session at 10:16PM

No action.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education adjourn the meeting. Hicks, Horowitz. Approved. Unanimous.**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 pm

Submitted by Regina Bobroske, Board of Education Secretary

Recorded by Mary Maday